

MEETING : **CHESHIRE EAST LOCAL ACCESS FORUM**
DATE : **13 March 2013**

REPORT OF : Linda Rose, Member

ROAD SAFETY ON RURAL ROADS

A meeting was held on 16 January 2014 in Wilmslow to discuss the above. Present were CELAF members Dale Langham and Linda Rose. The objectives of the meeting were to identify specific problems and suggest possible solutions. The following points were raised as contributory factors to making rural roads dangerous for vulnerable road users (VRUs) accessing the countryside:-

1. Speeding – lack of speed limits, lack of enforcement where there are limits, inappropriateness of 60mph limit on most rural roads.
2. Inconsiderate driving, disregarding possible dangers, particularly in proximity of VRUs, i.e. cyclists, pedestrians, equestrians.
3. Visibility problems both with environment, e.g. overgrown hedges, blind bends, etc and also with pedestrians, cyclists, riders being hard to see if not wearing hi-viz.
4. Diminishing and/or obstructed verges – intended as a safe haven, many are 'claimed' by property owners and stones or posts placed on them, particularly dangerous for cyclists and riders.
5. Satnav – many hitherto VRU-friendly lanes are now having traffic of all sizes directed onto them by satnav packages.
6. HGV enforcement – where HGV limits are applicable, there is little or no policing of offenders.
7. Lack of circuitous off-road routes necessitating use of highways – particularly in the county of Cheshire with its dairy-farming background, there is a dearth of 'joined-up' routes so countryside access is not possible without venturing onto the highway.
8. Increasing development – with an ongoing programme of housing development throughout Cheshire East and the rest of the country, the levels of traffic will increase further in rural areas.
9. According to ROSPA, more deaths occur on rural roads than on urban ones. In 2010, there were 1,046 fatal accidents on rural roads compared to over 572 on urban roads

Possible Solutions?

1. The 'Quiet Lanes' scheme was introduced by the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) and is operating in many parts of the country with success. There has only been one pilot scheme in Cheshire East which is near Macclesfield. Further investigation into this and the addressing of any problems encountered with it, might be a helpful move as there are several lanes which would seem to be suitable

candidates for this status. For further information please see:
<http://www.cpre.org.uk/resources/transport/roads/item/1867-cpres-guide-to-quiet-lanes?highlight=WyJxdWlldClslmxhbmVzliwicXVpZXQgbGFuZXMiXQ>.

2. The Highway Code already makes detailed provision for driving appropriately in many circumstances regarding VRUs however these are largely ignored by many road users – both motorists and VRUs! Might this Forum contribute ideas/comments to national movements to improve such knowledge? For instance, ROSPA and Brake are just two such organisations which are very active in promoting safer roads. Could more emphasis be placed on driving test content relating to rural roads?
3. Can more ROWs be created enabling circuitous routes to be formed? This would help keep VRUs off the highways.
4. Does any CELAF member have any other comments or suggestions to add?

RECOMMENDED:

That Members consider the questions posed and the Forum's contribution to this area of work.